



DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20305

Executive Registry

81-1125/1

8 MAY 1981

IN REPLY
REFER TO 483

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THRU: Under Secretary of Defense for Research, Engineering and Acquisition

SUBJECT: DSCS Launch Delay (U)

1. (C) The purpose of this memorandum is to alert you personally to a tough decision that must be made in relation to our ability to provide reliable military satellite communications support for the high priority users of the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) and our ability to assure that we have the best capability possible to receive early warning of a missile attack against the United States. The JCS position arrived in your office this week.

2. (S) Current satellite communications support is provided by the DSCS II satellites deployed worldwide to serve the vital command and control needs of the National Command Authority (NCA), the JCS, the CINCs and critical wideband requirements of the intelligence community. The initial launch of the improved follow-on satellite, DSCS III, together with a replenishment DSCS II satellite, is scheduled for June 1981. This new satellite offers greater flexibility for accommodating the diverse DSCS community of users and provides a hundredfold increase in capacity under jamming attack in addition to its improved nuclear survivability. It is this satellite that will offer the greatest solution for the needs of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). This new satellite is ready to go but may well be delayed over a year because the Titan launch vehicle that was planned for this launch may not now be available. In other words, there is one launch vehicle and now two contenders for its use.

3. (S) The JCS has concurred with the Air Force recommendation to delay the June launch of the DSCS satellites to maintain a call-up launch capability for another critical program, the Defense Support Program (DSP), until an alternate launch capability is developed, or until either the DSP or DSCS program has an absolute need to launch. I expect that this decision may well result in at least a one year slip in the DSCS III Launch as well as a one year delay in replenishing our current DSCS II satellites. During this time period the risk is high that DSCS satellite coverage will degrade and that prolonged outages may occur in intelligence communications and other command and control circuits critical to national security interests.

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED

CLASSIFIED BY: Multiple Sources

REVIEW ON: 30 April 2001

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DCA Memo, 483, DSCS Launch Delay (U)

4. (C) There is a secondary issue that will also get a lot of visibility in this area. A one year delay in the DSCS program means an added cost of over 50 million dollars -- an issue that must go to the Congress.

5. (S) I cannot judge which of the two programs now forced to vie for the single launch vehicle is more critical to this nation's survival. I can, however, give you my professional advice as the provider of communications not only for the Defense Department but for other critical users as well. As I view the future, I am greatly concerned that I will not be in the position to provide the communications services that all of these activities will require in an emergency if the DSCS III launch is delayed.

6. (S) I believe this issue is significant and I recommend that you review the JCS recommendation at your level to be sure you are aware of the operational impact not only to the Defense Department, but to the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the NCA, and that you are fully appraised of the added cost implications of this decision.


WILLIAM J. HILSMAN
Lieutenant General, USA
Director

Copy To:
Director, National Security Agency
Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency

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REMARKS

Please note DDCI request.

Call 2-7
10 MAR 1981

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Remarks:

I want a strong message to Secretary for my signature pushing the process up hold on DSP

Executive Secretary
13 May 1981
Date

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